



Who Said There's No Kinship Care in Virginia? – Creative Strategies to Family Connections

Denise Sterling Gallop
Comprehensive Services Act Coordinator
Hampton, VA
November 2010



Overview of Kinship Care

Definition / Child Welfare League of America



What is Kinship Care?

- "Kinship care is the full time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a bond with a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural values and ties of affection. It allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment."



Informal Kinship Care

- “the family decides.....”







Formal Kinship Care


- “determination by the Court and the child protective service agency.....”






Andrew Billingsly, Sociologist, Author, Professor


- “The family is at once the most sensitive, important, and enduring element in the culture of a people. Whatever its structure, its most important function is everywhere the same.....namely to ensure the survival of its people.”





Hampton Virginia Systems of Care Core Values and Beliefs

- ❖ Keeping children and families together is the best possible use of resources.
- ❖ Hampton partners with all who can support children and families' successful outcomes.
- ❖ We begin with outcomes not process.
- ❖ Families are the experts about their families.
- ❖ All stakeholder groups are accountable for positive outcomes for children and their families at home, school and in the community.
- ❖ Child centered, family focused and community based service delivery is the law and must be turned into actions.
- ❖ We will do *whatever it takes* to support the success of children and families.
- ❖ Trying hard is not good enough. Nothing Short of Best Care! Evergreen by Mark Froehner - 2005



How To Get There

- Family Group Conferencing (CPS, CSA & Foster Care)
- Foster Care Goal: Placement with Relative
- Dual Goals (Concurrent Planning)
- Judge Orders Parent to give list of relatives
- Relief of Custody




Supportive Services

- "While kinship care promotes positive family relationships, kinship caregivers and the children in their care are often in need of support services."
- How Is This Support Provided in Hampton, Virginia????????????





Creative Approach to Family Stability



Teaching Parent Program


- Developed to work with birth parents and other natural family supports (grandparents, aunts, uncles, Sunday school teachers, etc.) whose children have been described as imminent risk of being removed from their families and/or communities. Some examples of at-risk youth and families would include:
 - ✓ Youth with high end emotional, behavioral, medical and/or psychiatric issues that are difficult to maintain without constant support;
 - ✓ Youth who are at risk of entering the foster care system due to parental incapacity (mental health issues, financial instability, substance abuse, incarceration, terminal illness, etc.) and/or criminal issues;



Teaching Parent Program

- The Teaching Parent is provided with an array of services that will strengthen the family unit and allow children to remain in the community in the least restrictive environment.







Teaching Parent Program

- Services included in the program are:
 - An 8-10 week specialized training that allows the teaching parent to better understand and work with at-risk children.

The training curriculum includes topics such as:

- Parenting special kids, positive discipline, crisis intervention, behavior modification, attachment and loss issues, emotional disturbances, sexual abuse issues, anger and aggression, medications and the DSM IV, special education and school advocacy, networking with community agencies, groups, and people, time management and organization, and taking care of yourself.





Teaching Parent Program


- Additional services include:
 - Ongoing training to support continued education for the teaching parents;
 - Case management services including community linkages, behavior management, and crisis intervention to support the entire family
 - A monthly stipend to support the family's goal of providing a child-centered, family-focused and community-based plan for the child;
 - Ongoing Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) support and review to insure that quality services are provided.



Teaching Parent Program

- Other Supportive Services offered:
 - Kinship Care Navigation
 - Respite
 - Resource Parenting
 - Personal care assistance
 - Housing Assistance
 - Other Services



Creative Funding

- The Comprehensive Services Act (CSA)
 - ✓ Passed in 1992 by the General Assembly with the intention of creating a collaborative system of services and funding that is child-centered, family-focused and community-based when addressing the strengths and needs of troubled and at-risk youth and families in Virginia.
 - ✓ Funds were "pooled" from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.



Creative Funding

- The Comprehensive Services Act (CSA)
 - The purpose of the law is to:
 - ✓ "Ensure that services and funding are consistent with the Commonwealth's policies of preserving families and providing appropriate services in the least restrictive environment, while protecting the welfare of children and maintaining the safety of the public;"
 - ✓ "Identify and intervene early with young children and their families who are at risk of developing emotional or behavioral problems, or both, due to environmental, physical or psychological stress;"




Creative Funding

- The purpose of the law cont'd
 - ✓ "Design and provide services that are responsive to the unique and diverse strengths and needs of troubled youths and families;"
 - ✓ "Increase interagency collaboration and family involvement in service delivery and management;"
 - ✓ "Encourage a public and private partnership in the delivery of services to troubled and at-risk youths and their families;"
 - ✓ "Provide communities flexibility in the use of funds and to authorize communities to make decisions and be accountable for providing services in concert with these purposes (Code of Virginia 2.2-5200).




Creative Funding

- Funding Categories that could be utilized:
 - ✓ Foster care prevention funds
 - ✓ Specialized Education funds
 - ✓ Non-mandated funds



Outcomes

- Children are able to remain with their families and in our community.
- Hampton has no youth placed in restrictive living environments such as residential treatment or group homes.
- Hampton has experienced over a 70% reduction in foster care population in the last 5 years without no youth returning to foster care during 18 month period.



Questions and Comments
